



# CRITICAL SUICIDE STUDIES SYMPOSIUM 4.1

This symposium will be a participatory hybrid experience: "Roomies" and "Zoomies" will be connected through an in-room camera, projector and microphone system. There will be small group conversations - Roomies at their tables and Zoomies in breakout rooms - and a mix of online and in-person collaboration tools. Throughout the days we will weave and connect Roomies and Zoomies together, as well as use some online tools to make their learning + work visible to each other in real time.

## DAY 1: FRIDAY OCTOBER 21

*All times in Pacific Daylight Time (Victoria, BC)*

<b>9:00-9:30am</b>	Roomies registration, coffee + meet and greet, and Zoom doors open
<b>9:30-10:00am</b>	Welcome, Announcements, & Territorial Acknowledgment
<b>10:00-10:30am</b>	Sharing the Hybrid Experience + Meeting Each Other (Roomies breakout groups, Zoomies breakout groups)
<b>10:30-11:15am</b>	Key Note Speaker: N'alaga O'Brien (in-person)
<b>11:15-12:00pm</b>	Reflections & Reciprocity (Roomies breakout groups, Zoomies breakout groups, + weaving together)
<b>12:00-12:10pm</b>	Poetry: Holding hands at the dinner table, Luiza Costa
<b>12:10-1:00pm</b>	Roomies Lunch, Zoomies Offline Lunch
<b>1:00-2:30pm</b>	Self-organized Conversations: New possibilities for practice, scholarship, and community-building around re-imagining suicide, suicide prevention, and creating worlds worth living in (Roomies breakout groups, Zoomies breakout groups)
<b>2:30-3:00pm</b>	Break
<b>3:00-4:00pm</b>	Pecha Kucha (in-person presenters)
<b>4:00-5:00pm</b>	Pecha Kucha Follow Up (Roomies breakout groups, Zoomies breakout groups)
<b>5:00-7:00pm</b>	Roomies Reception: Cocktails starting at 5pm, Hors d'oeuvres at 6pm (Zoom room closed for the day)



## DAY 2: SATURDAY OCTOBER 22

*All times in Pacific Daylight Time (Victoria, BC)*

<b>8:00-9:00am</b>	Online Poster Presentation (everyone on Zoom)
<b>9:00-9:30am</b>	Roomies coffee + meet and greet, Zoomies connecting/break
<b>9:30-10:00am</b>	Poetry: Voicing Suicide, Katrina Jaworski and Daniel Scott
<b>10:00-11:00am</b>	Pecha Kucha (online presenters)
<b>11:00-12:00pm</b>	Pecha Kucha Follow Up (Roomies breakout groups, Zoomies breakout groups)
<b>12:00-12:10pm</b>	Poetry: A mother's perspective on suicide loss: Reading from A Fine Yellow Dust, Laura Apol
<b>12:10-1:00pm</b>	Roomies Lunch, Zoomies Offline Lunch
<b>1:00-2:00pm</b>	Short Paper Presentations: Katrina Jaworski, Saartje Tack and Silvia Canetto
<b>2:00-2:50pm</b>	Self-organized Conversations: What ideas from the paper presentations do you want to dive in deeper together? (Roomies breakout groups, Zoomies breakout groups)
<b>2:50-3:05pm</b>	Break
<b>3:05-4:00pm</b>	Self-organized Conversations: What are your ideas for collaboration + what could come next for this CritSui network? (Roomies breakout groups, Zoomies breakout groups)
<b>4:00-5:00pm</b>	Key Note Speakers: Jeffrey Ansloos and Shanna Peltier (online)
<b>5:00-5:30pm</b>	Closing Remarks & Next Steps



## KEY NOTES

### TOKʷIMSAS: YOU ARE STRONG

#### **N'älaga / Kaaw Kuuna (Avis O'Brien)**

**Title:** Łokʷimsas: You Are Strong

**Synopsis:** In this 1-hour presentation Nalaga Avis O'Brien will share her experience of living with the spirit of suicide, and how this has inspired the creation of the Łokʷimsas program. Folks will learn about the evidence based research that grounds the methodology we utilize in the Łokʷimsas, a 10 week suicide prevention initiative for Indigenous youth. In this work we look at the spirit of suicide from a non pathological lens, seeing it as a normal human response to carrying the burdens of 500+ years of attempted and ongoing colonial genocide. We support youth to utilize their breath, bodies, language reclamation, the land and Kwakwaka'wakw Culture as tools for self regulation and acts of resistance to the epidemic of suicidality.

### INDIGENOUS YOUTH ORGANIZING FOR HEALTH JUSTICE, WELLNESS, AND LIVABILITY

#### **Yúusnewas, Shanna Peltier PhD student, and Jeffrey Ansloos**

**Synopsis:** Yúusnewas is an Indigenous youth-led program that provides opportunities for Indigenous youth to connect with each other, build skills and knowledge to take care of each other by centering Indigenous perspectives and incorporating traditional teachings. In this conversation, we reflect on our multi year partnership together learning about how to best support young people in their organizing for health justice, wellness and liveability. Drawing on principles of harm reduction, decolonization, mutual aid and direct action, we emphasize the importance of youth leadership and knowledge in promoting health, wellness and livable worlds.



# PECHA KUCHA: FRIDAY OCTOBER 21

## Christine Skwiot

**Title:** Keywords of Finance and Suicide: An Entangled History

**Synopsis:** Studies of suicide in the modern West have long focused on how medical professionals came to define it as an individual, internal pathology. But, starting in the late eighteenth century, the financialization of the self and the medicalization of suicide became mutually sustaining processes, especially in the newly United States. Many “keywords” of suicide have roots in finance and medicine: depression, failure, mania, panic, risk, speculation. By the twentieth century, medical professionals secured hegemony over the production of knowledge about suicide. Yet, ideas drawn from business continued to shape cultural scripts of suicide in the U.S., especially among its leading demographic: white men. This presentation combines autobiography and cultural history to discuss the entangled history of a few keywords and cultural scripts of suicide and finance, ending with novelist William Styron, whose memoir, *Darkness Visible*, helped open a space for people who challenge medical authority by centering lived experiences of suicide.

## Emily Yue

**Title:** Brits of Colour and suicide in Britain as hostile environment

**Synopsis:** In this presentation I will chart how Brits of Colour are erased and abjected in the UK, from national suicide reporting, to suicide research on race, and in everyday life. Via migratism – the ascription of migrant status – colonial amnesia is upheld and Britain is imagined as White; people of Colour assumed to be migrants. As a result, high rates of suicide among mixed ethnicity people in Britain are assumed to be produced in a fictional elsewhere. Collaborating to create a counter-archive of suicide knowledge, my contributors and I are evidencing their existence as Brits of Colour, in addition to locating their suicidality in Britain as a hostile environment. However, my contributors resist assimilating into belonging in Britain. Rather, by claiming and reappropriating their inauthenticity, they disrupt the normative structures that produce their abjection, producing a more liveable Britain for its migratised citizens.

## Katelyn Ward

**Title:** Risky Bodies: Implications of Risk for LGBT People in Therapy Room

**Synopsis:** Suicide risk assessment (SRA) is seen as an integral component to the practice of psychotherapy, however, there is great debate surrounding the validity and efficacy of this procedure. Specifically, the discourse of risk including ‘risking’ or ‘categorizing’ individuals has the potential to negatively impact the population that psychotherapists wish to aid. This study aims to critically interrogate the notion of ‘risking’ for LGBT people in SRA to gain a better understanding of what works and what is harmful in SRA procedures. This presentation utilizes data from qualitative interviews with LGBT people (n=4). Guided by intersectionality and suicidism as methodological frameworks initial results show benefits of relationality, attention to structural determinants of health, and livability. This program of research will expand our knowledge of the implications of SRA practices for LGBT people and the ways that their nuances inform subsequent programs of care.



# PECHA KUCHA: FRIDAY OCTOBER 21

## **Penelope Siebert**

**Title:** Exploring the mental and emotional consequences of female sexual abuse of an adolescent male; a performative masculinity perspective

**Synopsis:** In this single case study, a therapeutic narrative approach was used to facilitate an individual's re-storying of the events that led to a suicide attempt and thoughts of murdering his partner. Three themes were derived from the analysis, status, social norms and practices, and family relationships. The crisis point came when the acts central to his constructed masculinity, formed and reinforced by his early experiences were not sufficient for him to attain the prestigious status he felt he deserved. There was a shift in his notions of being a man and a recognition that the performative acts associated with dominance - being strong, big build and sexually virile, no longer fitted with the other forms of masculinity that required performative acts associated with knowledge, being educated and emotionally available. He felt that his early adolescence prevented him from attaining the emotional foundations and the performative acts required for him to attain his status.

## **Sabine Huss**

**Title:** Wounded Healer or Stigmatized Healer? - First-Person Experiences With Suicidality Among Helping Professionals in Suicide Prevention and Intervention

**Synopsis:** My research explores the experiences of helping professionals who have first-hand experience with suicidality and who work with suicidal people. Working from an insider perspective, and using narrative methodology with a feminist intersectional lens, I analyzed stories gathered from interviews with five helping professionals in the field who have direct lived experience with suicidality. Findings indicate that participants believe that their lived experience with suicidality benefits their practice in multiple ways. Nonetheless, this particular lived experience remains a taboo, making its disclosure 'risky'. Still, some participants disclose their lived experience to combat clients' shame and isolation. My research contributes to the conversation about what it means to be a helping professional with lived experience with suicidality in the area of suicide prevention and intervention, and thus to lessening the stigma surrounding this experience.

## **Violeta Krasnić**

**Title:** Our Suicides, Ourselves: Prospect for Self-Advocacy by People with Lived Experience Against Stigma and Suffering of Suicide

**Synopsis:** For a social justice approach to suicide and suicide prevention to create needed change for people with lived experience of suicide (Lezine 2016), it must engage with and enable realization of their vision for empowerment and self-advocacy. While the post-positivist "psy" paradigm of contemporary suicidology pathologizes and individualizes suicide (Marsh 2010), critical suicide studies' engagement of social justice approach opens possibilities for conceptualizations of suicide and suicide prevention that shift academic, research, and activist foci from eradication of self-death to betterment of collective-life. Crucial to this process is the question of agency and of how suicidal people's individual and collective meaning-making of suicide and suicide prevention drives or restrains prospects for their self-advocacy. In this presentation, I outline challenges and opportunities for people with lived experience of suicide to engage in collaborative knowledge production and advocacy which defends and/or changes their worlds.



# PECHA KUCHA: SATURDAY OCTOBER 22

## Alexandre Baril

**Title:** Suicidism as a new theoretical framework to understand the oppression of suicidal people

**Synopsis:** Drawing from the scholarship of critical suicide studies, this presentation argues that suicidal people are oppressed by what I call structural suicidism, an oppression that until now has been under-theorized. Each year, suicidism and its preventionist script and strategies reproduce violence and cause additional harm and death among suicidal people through forms of criminalization, incarceration, discrimination, stigmatization and pathologization. This is particularly true for marginalized groups experiencing multiple oppressions, including queer, trans, disabled and Mad people. Suicidism as a theoretical framework questions the idea that the best way to help suicidal people is through the logic of prevention. I put forth the argument that supporting assisted suicide for suicidal people could better prevent unnecessary deaths. Offering a new queercrip model of (assisted) suicide, I invite the audience to imagine what could happen if we started thinking about (assisted) suicide from an anti-suicidist and intersectional framework.

## Kelly Stewart

**Title:** The ghosts that haunt our intergenerational suicide stories

**Synopsis:** In this paper, I examine the ghosts that haunt the stories my female participants and I tell about intergenerational suicide in our families. We'll think with Derrida (deconstruction) to explore unsayable, unconscious traces in and around the well-rehearsed versions we tell. To illustrate this, I bring this analytic question to the data of one participant: How does Nancy's presence in her family make visible the excesses of gender in the event of deconstruction? Like all participants, Nancy shared her multi-layered, deep story of intergenerational suicide through four engagements (writing, interview, writing, interview). In these earliest stages of deconstructive analysis, I examine moments that disrupt or unsettle what was said or remembered before. What is the story not being told? I'll share my earliest sense of the ghosts that haunt a story that's already filtered, processed, and interpreted.

## Mujde Altin

**Title:** "I don't want to die without any scars." – The Representation of Male Suicide and Moral Crisis of Masculinity in Hollywood Cinema

**Synopsis:** Over the past two decades, there has been an increasing interest in understanding the role of hegemonic masculinity in male suicidal behavior due to the disparity in death by suicide. Hegemonic masculinity is based on active agency, rigidity, and strength, not displaying feelings and weaknesses. The contribution of recent qualitative research allowed us to understand better why men who failed to fit into the traditional masculine ideals choose to end their lives. In this presentation, I will try to show the portrayal of suicidal men and their constructions of masculine gender roles in Hollywood cinema. In particular, my focus will be on two well-known American movies; *Taxi Driver* (1976) and *Fight Club* (1999). I will discuss how the two male protagonists from these movies face the moral crisis of masculinity and identity; and how we can understand the representation of their tragic endings on the screen.



# PECHA KUCHA: SATURDAY OCTOBER 22

## **Shaila Kumbhare**

**Title:** A Reconceptualization of Suicide and Social Worker's Duty to Report

**Synopsis:** Building on Marsh's (2016) four assumptions about modern suicidology, the author presents four assumptions imbedded in social work suicide duty to report policy. These are: that social workers should honour the teachings of medical science, that suicidal individuals are incapable of acting in their own best interest, that social workers are experts in suicide, and that preserving life does less harm than allowing death. These assumptions are examined with consideration for their confluent history, which is rooted in carceral violence against the Mad Community.

## **Tama Dey and Diptarup Chowdhury**

**Title:** 'Visibilizing what is invisible': Rescuing the alternate stories of youth suicide critiquing mainstream clinical practices in India

**Synopsis:** In the presentation, the 'backstory' behind the urgency of taking critical perspective in addressing youth suicide as felt by the authors will be shared. The authors will draw their experiences of how mental distress and suicide is cultured in mainstream clinical psychology academics/curriculum, clinical practices and research in India. Taking a critical stance, they will share their views on how 'broader contexts' get subjugated in addressing mental distress as well as suicide. Drawing from years of training in narrative practices, the authors will share some ideas and approaches deemed valuable in reclaiming neglected experiences. At the end they will pull out few alternate 'stories' from an ongoing research which intends to explore broader understanding of youth suicide to foster a community of solidarity through an action research in India. With that, the authors will also share some visibilities emerging with the reclamation of invisibilized experiences through the research.



# SHORT PAPER PRESENTATIONS

## Katrina Jaworski

**Title:** Who can speak for whom: Notes towards an ethic of drawing on lived experiences in research on suicide

**Synopsis:** Lived experiences with suicide have been recognised as a valid and legitimate source of knowledge by the field of critical suicide studies. As important as this recognition is, to what extent can people with lived experiences of suicide speak on the behalf of others? What kind of critical issues does this speaking pose for researchers personally familiar with suicide? In response, I put myself on the line by briefly narrating my own experiences with suicide. Drawing on post-colonial and post-structural feminist scholarship, I then consider the degree to which I can speak. My argument is that those with lived experiences of suicide can speak on behalf of others, providing we adopt an ethic that recognises our positionality, which recognises that knowledge about suicide is not a universal given. I conclude by considering what my argument can offer towards being an organic intellectual in the field of critical suicide studies.

## Saartje Tack

**Title:** Wired for Survival: Suicide Survival Stories and the Function of Nature in Suicide Prevention

**Synopsis:** Dominant understandings of suicide and suicide prevention are structured around the assumption that in suicide, the desire to live is a natural characteristic of bodies that is temporarily compromised. In this paper, I perform close readings of what are known as suicide survival stories. Specifically, I identify a particular tension in these stories: they are characterized by a conviction that the desire to live is a natural characteristic of bodies, referred to as the survivor instinct, yet simultaneously discuss the work and effort that is required for survival. My intention here is not to invalidate people's lived experiences. On the contrary, with my discussion I aim to open up a conversation about the ways in which such a turn to nature functions as a mechanism for administrating who gets to occupy a position from which they can speak, and thus which stories are heard and which are silenced.

## Silvia Sara Canetto

**Title:** Men and Suicide: Critical-Suicide-Studies Theory, Research, and Prevention

**Synopsis:** This presentation draws on my theoretical and empirical work to challenge the dominant paradigm on men and suicide. Dominant theories link men's suicide to their public-life roles—particularly, their economic-provider role. These theories predict that men's suicide rates would be higher when men's roles as financial providers are under threat, like in times of economic crisis or following retirement. Economic adversities—including unemployment and retirement—do not account for men's high suicide rates. My new multi-country research shows that men's suicide rates are lower in countries where men do more family care work—including when unemployment rates are high. My study's findings, together with related findings, highlight the costs for men (as for women) of the male economic-provider script. For men, as for women, having unpaid family care work and paid-work responsibilities is associated with better health and longevity. Implications for theory, research and prevention of men's suicide are discussed.



# POSTER SESSION

## Alexandria R. Pavelich

**Title:** The Life-Saving Role of Service Dogs for Canadian Military Veterans Experiencing Suicidality  
**Synopsis:** Despite ample anecdotal evidence, there is limited research exploring how human-animal relations may impact suicidality. Using a critical suicidology approach, my research explored the significant role the human-animal bond has in mediating suicidality. Analyzing in-depth interview data, I conducted a thematic analysis to explore the experiences of Canadian military Veterans experiencing suicidality working alongside service dogs (SDs). My methodology employed emotion and pattern coding to discover the unique social support system enabled by the SDs which acted as a catalyst to increase feelings of "mattering." Mattering is a validated construct shown to reduce feelings of loneliness and hopelessness that are commonly associated with suicidality. My study is the first of its kind, known to me, to show that feelings of mattering can exist between a human and animal. Further, the Veterans reported their SDs as being the direct catalyst in reducing self-harm and suicidality, while also promoting feelings of hope.

## Hosanna Fukuzawa

**Title:** Ainu Suicide in the Literature and Media: A Qualitative Review

**Synopsis:** Referring to widespread cases of suicide has been a popular way to represent the dire situation Ainu communities were put under by the Japanese Empire. Curiously however, actual first-hand accounts and data regarding Ainu suicide cases and suicidality are scarce and largely unreliable. Primary sources on Ainu suicide are either outdated or unreliable, however, scholars concerned with the health and wellbeing of the Ainu continue to refer to these sources today. This presentation will attempt to show this by analyzing how Ainu suicide is reported in both the media and academic literature.

## The Suicide Cultures Team

**Title:** Mapping Suicidescapes: A socio-cultural, geographic, and politically engaged approach to suicide

**Synopsis:** The Suicide Cultures project is a sociologically informed, interdisciplinary study exploring experiences and responses to suicide in different communities across Scotland. This poster focuses one of our key concepts, 'suicidescapes'. Building on work from geographies of death, 'suicidescapes' entail a focus on cultural meanings, social practices, structures, place, and time. We present preliminary findings from our on-going qualitative-mixed methods data collection across Scotland to show how overlapping forces – individual and structural – shape experiences of suicide, highlighting cultural, emotional, and physical landscapes that form particular suicidescapes. Suicidescapes are located within specific geographies, link to and overlap with larger national suicide cultures. This work provides vital empirical evidence for why rates of suicide vary within, and between, geo-culturally bounded spaces. Our approach extends a concern with quantifying suicide, to consider the affects and effects of suicide for different communities.



# POSTER SESSION

## **Jude Smit**

**Title:** What can we learn from Further and Higher Education students' lived experiences of attempted suicide?

**Synopsis:** The research is a mixed methods study focusing on what we can learn from Further and Higher Education students' lived experiences of attempted suicide. This study considers the implications and application of data gathered by identifying themes, risk and protective factors for suicide attempts, the impact of and on an individual's college and/or university experience, as well as identifying fears and perceptions and informing support. It aims to destigmatise what has become an increasing reality for many young adults and to empower both the students and those who interact with them. The poster will outline the rationale behind the research and highlight research design, arts-based research methodology and some emerging findings. Using arts-based methods will help us gain insights that words alone may not convey or facilitate.

## **Ayo Dalgety-Dean**

**Title:** "Only strong people commit suicide"

**Synopsis:** Suicide ideation - "Only strong people commit suicide". Thoughts of ending one's life, is the investigation of this paper to the context of Guyana. Particularly, I delve into the cultural practices of suicide to highlight findings from an ethnographic PhD study conducted on the sociocultural perspectives of suicide in Guyana. Of importance to the focus of this paper is the culture and belief systems that shape cultural mores and give credence to committing suicide, conditioned and contextualized by family and community. Ethnography was my approach, because it supported and gave due considerations to the many informalities and narratives about how Guyanese think and feel about suicide which makes it a norm: a belief, simulated as part of the cultural mores that makes dying by suicide a plausible solution to problems in the family and community.